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MORAL SERIES

BY
RODERICK MacEACHEN
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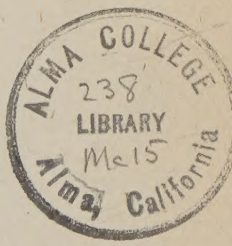
Precepts of the Church Special Questions



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MORAL SERIES

Vol. V

CHAPTER I

The Precepts of the Church

THE Church has power to make laws. These laws bind in conscience. Wilfully and deliberately to break a grave precept of the Church is a mortal sin.

The Church acts in the name of Christ. The Church continues the mission of Christ upon earth. This is a doctrine of Faith. "The eternal pastor and bishop of our souls in order to render the saving work of Redemption perennial, decided to build holy Church."[1]

Christ gave His Own power and

[1] Vatican Council, Proem. ad. sess. IV.

authority to the Church. He said to the Apostles: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth."[2] And again: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."[3]

The power of the Church emanates directly from Christ. The Church possesses a threefold power. She possesses teaching power. She possesses the power of ministry. Then she possesses the power of rule and discipline.

By her teaching power the Church infallibly delivers to all men the doctrines of Christ. By her ministerial power she transmits to all men the grace of Redemption gained for mankind by Christ.

By her ruling power the Church directs and governs the faithful in all that pertains to religion. "The ruling power of the Church is intended to

[2] St. Matthew xxviii, 18.
[3] St. John xx, 21.

decree laws and penalties, or what is almost the same, to preserve intact discipline. Under the name of discipline come all those practical and external rules laid down by the Church. By means of these the faithful are kept in the Faith and led to eternal life. This power of command, and that indeed by means of laws and penalties, is attributed to the Church in sacred writings. In fact, the power of command is included in the very idea of a stable and perfect society such as is the Church. Ecclesiastical discipline certainly prevailed in the Apostolic Church. It was established and regulated by the Apostles themselves. They gave forth laws and sanctioned them by penalties."[4]

The New Testament mentions many disciplinary laws laid down by the Apostles. They made laws for the preservation of the Faith. They made

[4] Comp. Juris Ecclesiastici. Aichner, Brixen, 1900.

laws to guide the faithful in matters of morality and worship. They imposed penalties upon those who broke the law.

St. Paul "went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, commanding them to keep the precepts of the Apostles and ancients."[5]

The Apostles held a general council. Here they gave forth decisions that were to guide the faithful. "And the Apostles and ancients assembled to consider of this matter."[6]

Christ Himself commands obedience to the Church: "And if he will not hear them: tell the Church. And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."[7]

"We are of God," says St. John. "He that knoweth God, heareth us. He that is not of God, heareth us not."[8]

[5] Acts of the Apostles xv, 41. [7] St. Matthew xviii, 17.
[6] Acts of the Apostles xv, 6. [8] 1 St. John iv, 6.

St. Paul warns the faithful to obey the priests and bishops. "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief."[9]

Some precepts of the Church are intended for special groups in the Church. These are called particular precepts. Such are the regulations laid down for the guidance of the clergy. There are also particular precepts that bind religious.

There are other precepts that bind the faithful in general. These are called general precepts. There are many such precepts.

Ordinarily six of these precepts are called the chief Commandments of the Church. They are:

To hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation.

[9] Epistle to the Hebrews xiii, 17.

To fast and abstain on the days appointed.

To confess our sins to a duly authorized priest at least once a year.

To receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time.

To contribute to the support of our pastors and to the maintenance of Church and school.

Not to marry persons who are not Catholics, or who are related to us within the fourth degree of kindred, nor privately without witnesses, nor to solemnize marriage at forbidden times.

CHAPTER II

Church and State

THERE are two distinct governing powers in the world. The one is the Church. The other is the State. These two powers are necessary for the government of the human race.

The Church presides over the religious affairs of men. The State maintains and rules the civil order. Thus there is a twofold order of society. This is necessary because of man's fall into sin.

"If men had preserved their original state of innocence they would doubtless now constitute but a single order of society. They would be united under God's direct rule. They would be glued together by the closest bonds of

charity. They would not need a twofold governing power over them."[1]

By sin man was separated from God. He was torn away from his eternal heredity. Then it became necessary to lead him back to God.

It is for this reason that God constituted a religious authority upon earth. He established the Church. He gave her power and authority. Thus she could rule, direct, and teach men to return to their God.

But sin also disturbed the social order amongst men. It banished charity from men's hearts. Soon after the fall, Cain asked: "Am I my brother's keeper?"[2] Murder had already tainted the human race.

Thus it became necessary to establish another ruling power amongst men. They had already begun to unite into a social order. It was nec-

[1] Comp. Juris Eccl. Aichner, Brixen, 1900.
[2] Genesis iv, 9.

essary to protect the rights of one against the other. Social life had to be guarded. Thus the civil power arose.

States and governments were indeed founded by men. Yet it was religion that moved them to form the social order. Thus the civil power comes from God.

Holy Writ testifies to this fact. "Hear therefore, ye kings, and understand: learn, ye that are judges of the ends of the earth.

"Give ear, you that rule the people, and that please yourselves in multitudes of nations: for power is given to you by the Lord, and strength by the Most High, who will examine your works, and search out your thoughts."[3]

"Let every soul be subject to higher powers," says St. Paul, "for there is no power but from God."[4] Both

[3] Wisdom vi, 2–4.

[4] Epistle to the Romans, xiii, 1.

civil and ecclesiastical power come from God.

The Church and the State form two distinct societies. Each has its own ruler. Each has its own authority.

The Church belongs to a far higher order than the State. The Church is divine. The State is human.

The Church has a higher mission than the State. The mission of the Church is to sanctify immortal souls. It renders worship to God. It leads men to eternal beatitude.

The Church is not a kingdom of this world. It is, as it were, a resting place for pilgrims on their way to their eternal home.

"Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now my kingdom is not from hence."[5]

[5] St. John xviii, 36.

The State is constituted for mere natural purposes. It guards the rights of men. It procures the natural well-being of men upon earth.

The Church uses supernatural means for fulfilling her purpose. She teaches a divine doctrine. She administers seven Sacraments that confer divine grace upon those who receive them worthily. She uses all the faculties and powers that her Divine Founder conferred upon her. But the State possesses only natural means to effect its end.

The Church is universal. It embraces all nations of the earth. But civil power is limited. It is provincial. It is confined to particular regions.

The Church is destined to last to the end of the world. Kingdoms and republics rise, flourish, and decay. But the Church remains firm and vigorous.

The power of the Church and the

power of the State are independent of each other. This does not mean that the Church should be entirely separate from the State.

The State needs the Church. The Church also needs the State. In making laws the State must pay due regard to the Church. Likewise, the Church must pay due regard to the State.

A Catholic State should be in even closer union with the Church. Like any other State it must seek the material welfare of its subjects. But it must also show concern for their eternal welfare. It must cooperate with the Church in working out their eternal salvation.

There must be a certain independence between Church and State. Each must be free to work out its proper end. The Church should leave the State unhampered in purely civic af-

fairs. The State should not interfere in ecclesiastical affairs.

The State regulates temporal affairs. It has a temporal mission to perform. In this it is not subject to the Church.

The Church must be independent of the State. It must be free to fulfil its divine mission. It must have full liberty to use all the means necessary for working out its proper end.

Christ Himself clearly made the distinction between the power of the State and the power of the Church. He said: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's."[6]

Here Christ clearly shows the two distinct spheres in human life. He recognizes the civil power. But He also points out the existence of the spiritual power upon earth.

By His Own actions Christ showed that religion was to be independent.

[6] St. Matthew xxii, 21.

When He began His public mission, He asked no permission of the civil authorities. He established His Church without asking either their consent or their aid.

In fact, the Jews tried to hinder Christ from preaching His Gospel. Nevertheless He continued His mission. He disregarded the threats and prohibitions of the scribes and Pharisees.

Likewise, the Apostles were forbidden to preach the Gospel of Christ. But like their divine Master, they sealed their mission with their blood.

On one occasion the Apostles were brought before the Jewish high-priest. The high-priest was a judge in Jewish law. He said: "Commanding we commanded you that you should not teach in this name; and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and you have a mind to bring the blood of this man upon us. But

Peter and the Apostles answering said: We ought to obey God, rather than men."[7]

The authority of the Church is divine. It pertains to things supernatural. Hence, in its own sphere, it is supreme. There is no power on earth that can justly interfere with it.

The ministers of the Church receive their power and authority from the Church. They need no authorization from earthly princes. Christ conferred this power upon them through the Apostles. He said to them: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[8]

[7] Acts of the Apostles v, 28, 29.
[8] St. Matthew xxviii, 19, 20.

CHAPTER III

Union of Church and State

THE Church and State are indeed distinct. They belong to two different orders. They have different missions to fulfil.

However, there must be perfect harmony between the Church and the State. They must work together. They must render each other mutual assistance. God intended that both should serve for the benefit of mankind.

There must then be unity of purpose between Church and State. Both must seek the welfare of man. Each works in its own sphere.

Both the Church and State must help man to attain his last end and destiny. In this they have a common purpose.

Both must seek the glory of God and the salvation of men. The Church uses direct means to produce these results. But the State uses indirect means to produce them.

"When the civil power and the priesthood work together in harmony then the world is ruled well, the Church flourishes and bears abundant fruits. But when they disagree, not only do little things fail to grow, but great things tumble down."[1]

The union of Church and State resembles the union of soul and body. Each has its own functions. The Church is like the soul of humanity. The State is like its body.

The soul gives life to the body. The Church gives spiritual life to humanity. "Wherefore there must needs be a certain regulated union between both powers. This union might justly be

[1] Ivo of Chartres, ep. 238 ad Pascal II.

compared to the bond by which soul and body are united in man."[2]

In fulfilling her mission the Church promotes the welfare of the State. The Church teaches princes to rule with meekness and justice. She teaches subjects to obey the laws of the land. She teaches them to honor and obey their rulers.

"Admonish them to be subject to princes and powers, to obey at a word, to be ready to every good work."[3]

By the bond of religion the Church promotes unity amongst the people of a country. True religion alone can move men to live together in peace and honor.

The Church teaches men justice. She bids them respect one another's rights. She admonishes every man to respect his neighbor's rights and property.

[2] Leo XIII, Encyclical "Immortale Dei."
[3] Epistle to Titus iii, 1.

The Church teaches men to look upon one another as brothers. She teaches the poor to be patient. She teaches the rich to be kind and merciful. She condemns those who oppress the poor.

The Church teaches true morality to the people. Morality is necessary for the well-being of the State. The State can only procure external morality. But the Church implants the principles of morality in men's hearts.

Human laws can not make men's hearts true and honest. But true religion implants honesty and fidelity in the hearts of men. Thus truth and honor and every virtue may exist in the State.

The Church teaches the sanctity of marriage. Thus she strengthens the very foundation of human society. This keeps the evil of divorce from the State.

The Church teaches the sacredness

of oaths. She teaches men to respect trusts and promises. She teaches men to fulfil their duties faithfully. Thus the State is enabled to fulfil its mission with justice. By their religion the citizens become men of truth and character.

The Church confers great benefits upon the State. Without religion there can be no stable government. An unbelieving nation necessarily sinks below the level of pagan civilization.

The State also helps the Church to fulfil her mission. The State punishes crimes. It demands external decency and honesty. Thus it is easier for the Church to teach men the principles of morality.

The State removes many obstacles from the work of the Church. It punishes fraud and deceit. It punishes violence and injustice. Thus men are disposed to receive the teachings of the Church.

The State protects ecclesiastical persons and ecclesiastical property. This is one of the greatest benefits that the State confers upon the Church. The State should protect all the rights of the Church. It thus enables the Church to acquire and possess the material means necessary for the fulfilment of her mission.

It is clear then that the Church and State should work hand in hand. There should be true unity between them. Yet the identity of each should remain distinct.

The Church and State should unite to promote the public welfare. They should be bound together in the most friendly manner.

CHAPTER IV

The Temporal Power of the Pope

IT IS indeed contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ to annex temporal power to spiritual power. It is forbidden to unite civil power with the power of the priesthood.

Christ would have His disciples free from the cares of this world. The Church binds her priests not to engage in secular affairs. They are not to seek power for its own sake. They are not to busy themselves with material things for the sake of gain. They are to devote themselves to the things of God.

Whenever the good of religion demands it, priests engage in temporal affairs. Thus pastors of souls are often

burdened with temporal cares. They must build churches and schools. They must provide for the financial needs of their parish.

The Church forbids all that can hinder the progress of religion. Ordinarily, it would be a great hindrance for a minister of the Gospel to be burdened with civil cares. Hence, the Church forbids it.

It is not permitted to annex civil power to the spiritual power. It matters not how great might be the temporal gain. "Yet the Pope does not hold his temporal principality for this purpose. He holds it so as to be better able to serve the utility of the Church and the needs of the faithful. Thus the temporal power that is here connected with the spiritual is not entirely secular. It is in a sense sacred. Hence, to hold such civil power in conjunction with spiritual power is not forbidden by any divine law, positive or natural.

It is also clear that to hold such power is opposed to no human law."[1]

The Pope has possessed temporal power for more than a thousand years. This power is not a part of his spiritual power. It is merely held together with the spiritual power. Hence, it is a good and useful union.

The temporal power of the Pope arose in turbulent times. Italy was overrun with barbarian hordes. The Pope alone could protect the country. For this reason Christian princes presented him a little dominion in which he would be sole ruler.

Here the Pope would be subject to no earthly power. He would be perfectly free to exercise his high office. None could interfere with his actions.

The Church embraces all nations of the world. The Pope in his little domain belongs to no nation. Thus

[1] Suarez de leg. 1; 4, a 10.

from absolutely neutral territory he rules Christendom.

The temporal power is indeed most useful and proper to the Pope. It is eminently proper that the Pope should be independent. He should be free to make laws for the Church without interference from secular powers.

The Roman Curia is composed of many congregations and officers. The central government of the Church is vast in its activities. Hence, it entails great expenditures. It is eminently proper then that the Pope should possess a patrimony to help cover these expenses.

The Pope dispenses great alms to worthy causes throughout the world. He expends vast sums yearly upon the missions in pagan lands. He is indeed the beloved father of Christendom.

Well might the Pope have a little domain to furnish means for his fatherly love and charity.

The Pope has been despoiled of his domains. He is today a prisoner in the Vatican. The Vatican, Castle Gandolfo, and the Lateran alone were left to him. This alone is neutral territory. Here alone is he independent.

Beyond those narrow limits the Pope would become a subject of a foreign power. He would be subject to the civil law of some nation. Hence, he remains in his narrow confines. Thus he preserves the honor and independence of the papacy.

The despoiling of the Pope is the great modern crime of nations. His rights were inviolable. No ruler upon earth had such an incontestable title as he had to his domain. He had the right of donation. He had the right of a thousand years' prescription. His rights had been recognized by all nations of the world. They were confirmed by solemn treaties.

The Pope was despoiled. The nations that had pledged their honor to protect his sacred rights stood by in silence. Thus they cooperated in the injustice. Then it was that fidelity disappeared amongst nations. Thereafter sacred treaties were to become but scraps of paper.

The nations knew that there was no longer any bond of fidelity amongst them. They began to suspect one another. They began to build enormous armaments. The natural result followed. They rushed to war with the ferocity of barbarians. They have made the rivers of Europe run red with the blood of their choicest manhood.

The Pope was despoiled. His income was gone. Now the enemies of religion thought they had won. They thought he would be powerless. They thought he could no longer maintain the government of the Church. They

thought he could no longer help the distressed of nations.

But they were doomed to disappointment. The heart of Christendom was touched. The faithful throughout the world ran to the assistance of their great White Father. They extended the helping hand to the beloved Prisoner of the Vatican.

The faithful send in their yearly offerings to the Pope. This is called the Peter's Pence. It is made up largely from the mites of the poor. It is a love offering to God and his holy Church.

The Peter's Pence is indeed yet inadequate to meet all the needs of the Holy Father. Yet it is growing each year. The faithful throughout the world are beginning to understand better. They are making greater sacrifices. Thus God brings good out of evil. He enables the faithful to show their love for Holy Church by these acts of unselfish devotion.

CHAPTER V

The Precept of Abstinence

THE practice of penance is an underlying principle of the Christian life. Christ Himself taught it by word and example. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say: do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[1]

Fasting and abstinence are forms of penance that have been practiced in the Church from the beginning. Abstinence is intended especially to suppress the evil desires of nature.

Even the great Apostle could say, "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway."[2]

[1] St. Matthew iv, 17.
[2] 1 Epistle to the Corinthians ix, 27.

Meat tends to give special nourishment to the body. Best of all foods, perhaps, it gives strength and vitality. It is also more delectable than other foods to most people. Hence, it is that the Church commands abstinence from flesh-meats.

The Church forbids the eating of flesh-meats on certain days. This is the precept of abstinence. It binds all that have reached the use of reason.

Those who have not reached the use of reason can not be bound by any precept. Hence, children under seven years of age are not bound to abstain.

However, it is a pious and universal custom in Christian families not to give meat even to young children on days of abstinence. Thus they learn in their tenderest years to observe this important precept.

In itself, the precept of abstinence imposes a grave obligation. However, to break this precept is not always a

mortal sin. To eat a very small piece of meat on a day of abstinence would perhaps constitute only a venial sin.

To eat meat at different times on a day of abstinence would constitute so many sins. To eat meat several times at one meal would be but one sin.

The precept of abstinence forbids only the flesh of animals. By animals is meant such as live upon land. Such are beef, veal, mutton, fowl and the like.

By custom in certain place it is permitted to eat the meat of beavers, otters, walruses. For the same reason the flesh of water-ducks and probably water-coots may be eaten. Sea-ravens, however, are forbidden.

All kinds of fish may be eaten on days of abstinence. Eels, frogs, turtles and such like may be eaten. Oysters, crabs, clams, caviar and the like are permitted.

Thus the flesh of certain animals is forbidden. Likewise are the other parts of such animals forbidden. The blood, marrow, suet, lard from these animals may not be eaten on days of abstinence.

Milk, butter, cheese and eggs may be used on days of abstinence. However, there is a general law to the contrary. Yet it has been abrogated in many countries. Oleomargarine may also be used.

It is permitted to use lard or any fat of animals for cooking. Yet it is not allowed to use soup made from meat. Nor are beef extracts and the like permitted on days of abstinence.

The general law of the Church prescribes abstinence for all fast-days and for all the Fridays of the year. Formerly Saturday was a day of abstinence. This was prescribed by a general law of the Church. In most

countries it is now permitted by papal indult to eat meat on Saturday.

Certain persons are excused from the obligation of abstinence. The sick, nursing mothers, and sometimes those who are soon to become mothers are excused.

Those who engage in hard manual labor are sometimes excused from the obligation of abstinence. Yet this privilege is conceded only to those who would otherwise be unable to perform their work.

Travelers may sometimes eat meat on days of abstinence. They may be unable to obtain other food. Then only are they permitted to eat meat if otherwise they can not obtain a suitable meal.

Catholics are sometimes invited to dine with others on days of abstinence. If they know meat is to be served they might decline the invitation. How-

ever, they may always go if they intend to abstain from meat.

Sometimes a mistake is made on days of abstinence. Meat has been prepared. Here a distinction must be made. It may be possible to prepare other food without great inconvenience. The food prepared may be preserved. Then it is not permitted to eat the meat prepared.

But perhaps the meat prepared would spoil. Perhaps no other food can be prepared without grave inconvenience. Then the meat may be eaten. Yet care must be taken to avoid scandal.

Meat is sometimes permitted by dispensation. Thus it is allowed to eat meat once a day on certain days in Lent. On these days it is not permitted to eat flesh and fish at the same meal.

Flesh and fish are thus forbidden only at the same meal. They may be

eaten separately at different times. For example, flesh may be eaten at noon and fish in the evening. This prohibition includes oysters, clams, frogs, caviar and all animal products of the water.

The prohibition not to use fish and flesh at the same meal is a grave obligation. It binds even those who are not obliged to fast. It binds children that are seven years of age and over.

CHAPTER VI

The Precept of Fasting

THERE is a threefold kind of fast. It may be natural ecclesiastical or moral.

To abstain from all food and drink is called natural fast. To abstain from food in the manner prescribed by the Church is called ecclesiastical fast. To fast in any other manner is called moral fast.

Holy persons have sometimes lived on bread and water. They have lived on roots and herbs. Or perhaps they have taken food only every second day. This is a moral fast.

There is a threefold object for fasting. It is intended to repress carnal desires. It makes it easier for us to raise our minds to things divine. It is a satisfaction for sin.

The fast of Lent is the solemn fast in the Church. It is prescribed by ecclesiastical precept. Lent embraces the forty days immediately preceding Easter. It is observed in memory of Christ's fast for forty days in the desert.

The fast of Lent was not instituted by direct divine precept. It was promulgated by the Apostles.

The precept of fasting is duplex. It regulates the amount of food that may be taken. It also determines the kind of food that may be taken.

But one full meal may be taken on fast days. Ordinarily, meat may not be eaten on fast days. Thus to violate the precept of fasting constitutes two sins if meat has also been eaten.

In itself the precept of fasting is grave. It conduces to the great spiritual good of the faithful. Yet circumstances may make the breaking of the fast a venial sin.

To take a little more food than the

precept permits would not ordinarily constitute a mortal sin. But to take a notable amount over and above that permitted would constitute a mortal sin.

To take two full meals on a fast day breaks the essence of the fast. Likewise, to take four ounces more than the amount allowed for the evening collation breaks the fast.

Fasting is prescribed for all the days of Lent except Sunday. It is also prescribed for the Ember days and for certain vigils.

The Ember Days are Wednesday, Friday and Saturday preceding the four seasons of the year. They follow the 13th of December, the first Sunday of Lent, Pentecost, and September 14th.

The vigils are the days preceding great feasts of the Church. The faithful are bound to fast on the vigils of Pentecost, the Feast of SS. Peter and

Paul, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the Feast of All Saints, and the Feast of the Nativity.

The Fridays of Advent are fast days. In certain countries the Wednesdays of Advent are also fast days.

Those who have not reached their twenty-first year are not bound to fast. Nor are those who have reached their sixtieth year any longer bound to fast. Both are, however, bound to observe the precept of abstinence, unless otherwise excused.

The precept of fasting binds for the natural day of twenty-four hours. If the essence of the fast has been once broken the precept can not then be observed on that day. If a person has taken two full meals, he can not observe the precept of fasting on that day.

However, the precept of fasting may be observed so long as the essence of the fast has not been broken. A person may forget that it is a fast day.

He takes his breakfast. This may have been equivalent to the evening collation. Then he may transfer his full meal to the evening. But he would not be permitted deliberately to transfer the collation to the morning.

But his breakfast may have been equal to a full meal. Then he is probably not bound to fast on that day. For he has broken the essence of the fast.

Abstinence does not pertain to the essence of fasting. It is possible to fast without abstinence from flesh-meat. In fact, dispensation is actually granted to eat meat on certain fast days in Lent.

CHAPTER VII

The Ecclesiastical Fast

BUT one full meal is permitted on fast days. This is generally taken about noon. A small collation may be taken in the evening. In the morning tea, coffee, chocolate or other drink may be taken together with a little bread or crackers. The food taken in the morning should not exceed two ounces.

The evening collation should not exceed the fourth part of an ordinary meal. This is considered to be about eight ounces. It matters not how much the individual may be in the habit of taking.

There is no amount fixed for the full meal taken on fast days. The

natural law of temperance in both eating and drinking should be observed.

Accepted custom has mitigated the precept of fasting. In the early Church the faithful observed almost the natural fast. They took no food until after sunset. Later, until the sixth century, nothing was taken until three o'clock in the afternoon. Then finally the one full meal was taken about noon. This is the present day observance of the ecclesiastical fast.

For any reasonable cause, it is permitted to take the full meal in the evening. Then the collation may be taken about noon.

Drink does not break the ecclesiastical fast-day obligation. Any liquids that are commonly taken to quench thirst are considered drink. Of itself, milk is not considered mere drink. It is rather considered as food. However, in some places skimmed milk is taken merely as a drink.

Fruit is generally taken as food. Hence, the fast may be broken by eating fruit.

Liquids taken as medicine do not break the fast. Certain drinks are sometimes taken to aid digestion. Such are coffee, tea, thin chocolate and the like. They do not break the fast.

Some are unable to fast. They are dispensed by ecclesiastical authority. Those who think they are excused from fasting should consult their pastor.

CHAPTER VIII

Annual Confession and Paschal Communion

THE Church binds all that have reached the use of reason to confess their sins at least once a year. They are also bound to receive the Holy Eucharist at least during the Easter time.

Annual confession was prescribed by the IV Lateran Council. "All the faithful of both sexes, after they have reached the use of reason, shall faithfully confess all their sins to their own priest, at least once a year. . . . They shall receive reverently at least at Easter the Sacrament of the Eucharist." This precept was reiterated by the Council of Trent.

The precept of annual confession entails a grave obligation. Those who

fail to fulfil this duty may be deprived of Christian burial.

The precept of annual confession binds all that have attained the age of discretion. Those who have completed their seventh year are considered as having attained the age of discretion. They are then bound by this precept unless especially excused.

The faithful may make their annual confession to any priest authorized to hear confessions. Only a worthy confession can satisfy the precept.

Annual confession is the least that the precept permits. Frequent confession is the practice of the faithful. The Sacrament of Penance is a remedy against sin. It takes away sin from the soul. It also imparts grace to avoid sin in the future.

Many devout souls receive the Sacrament of Penance weekly. They know the saving power of this great Sacrament. They use its graces to strengthen their souls against sin.

CHAPTER IX

Easter Communion

ALL that have reached the use of reason are bound to receive the Holy Eucharist at least during Easter time. This is a precept of the Church.

Easter time is not of the same extent in all countries. According to the general law of the Church, it embraces the two weeks between Palm Sunday and Low Sunday.

In the United States and Canada, Easter time extends from the first Sunday of Lent to Trinity Sunday. In England it extends from Ash Wednesday to Low Sunday. In Ireland it extends from Ash Wednesday to July 6, the Octave of the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul.

The precept to receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time entails a grave obligation. Those who defer their Communion until after the close of the Easter time, ordinarily commit a grave sin.

Only a worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist satisfies the Easter precept.

The reception of Holy Viaticum during the Easter time satisfies the Paschal precept.

Children that have reached the age of discretion are bound by the Paschal precept. Ordinarily those who have completed their seventh year are bound to receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time.

Children are now admitted to their First Communion in their seventh year. Ordinary children come to the use of reason at this age. They are then able to comprehend the mysteries of Faith sufficiently.

Ordinarily, children seven years of age can understand that they are receiving the body and blood of Christ. Thus they worthily receive the Holy Eucharist.

Children seven years of age know the difference between right and wrong. They are capable of sin. They receive the Sacrament of Penance. Hence, they are very properly admitted to Holy Communion at that tender age.

The precept of Easter Communion is not intended to indicate the practice of Holy Communion. It simply defines the limit between sinful neglect and Christian practice.

Christ gave us a divine command to receive the Holy Eucharist. Yet He did not define the time for this reception. This He left for His Church to define.

He says: "Amen, amen, I say to you: except you eat the flesh of the

Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you."[1]

In the early Church the faithful received Holy Communion every time they assisted at Mass. They used to attend the Holy Sacrifice daily. They were filled with great love for God in those days.

Later the devotion of the faithful began to cool. They began to receive the Holy Eucharist less frequently. It was only in the thirteenth century (1215) that the precept of Paschal Communion was given out.

In our day the faithful are again returning to the practice of frequent Communion. The number of daily Communions amongst the faithful is steadily increasing. With it grows apace fervent love for God.

The Holy Eucharist is called the Sacrament of God's love. It enkindles the Christian heart with love for God.

[1] St. John vi, 54.

It fills it with devotion and zeal. Thus Christ has said: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me."[2]

[2] St. John vi, 57, 58.

CHAPTER X

Censorship of Books

IT IS the work of the Church to preserve in all their purity the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Church is the divinely appointed guardian and teacher of Divine Revelation. She teaches mankind the Truth delivered to her by Christ and the Apostles. She also guards the Truth from error.

The Church has always warned the faithful against false teachers. St. Paul says: "Beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy and vain deceit; according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ."[1]

From the very beginning the Church has warned the faithful against danger-

[1] Epistle to the Colossians ii, 8.

ous writings. It is evident that St. Paul condemned evil books at Ephesus. For the people brought these book. and made a bonfire of them.

Thus the event is related: "And many of them who had followed curious arts, brought together their books, and burnt them before all: and counting the price of them, they found the money to be fifty thousand pieces of silver."[2]

The Church condemns those who teach false doctrines. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."[3]

The Church also condemns writings that contain error. Books have always been a powerful means of spreading teachings. They are especially so in modern times. The printing press has

[2] Acts of the Apostles xix, 19.
[3] Epistle to the Galatians i, 8.

made it possible to publish multiplied millions of books each year. Great is the power of the press for good or evil.

It would be impossible for all the faithful to learn for themselves what books are dangerous. Books are written on every conceivable subject. Often the false teaching is hidden between the lines. The error is like poison concealed in bread. It is perhaps discovered only when it produces its harmful effect.

Books are like drugs in an apothecary's shop. There the poisons are labeled. The cross bones and skull mark them to show that death is lurking there.

Evil books are often deadly to the faith that exists in men's hearts. Gradually they instil false principles in the mind.

Holy Mother Church well knows

the dangers that exist in false writings. Hence, she has placed a strict censorship on books that touch upon religion.

The Church has authority from God to define the doctrines of Faith. Her official decrees on Faith and morality are endowed with divine infallibility.

It is but natural then that Holy Church should pass upon those teachings that are opposed to Faith. With all propriety does she warn the faithful against writings that contain principles and ideas contrary to her divine teachings.

The Church passes judgment on books before they are published. Such are works that treat of Faith or morals. Such too are books that treat of Sacred Scripture, Church History and other subjects that bear upon religion. No book on any religious subject may be published in any place without the approbation of the bishop. It must

be approved by the bishop of the place in which it is published.

Generally the bishop appoints one of his priests to act as censor. The censor examines the manuscript. If he finds it in keeping with the teachings of the Church, he gives his "Nihil Obstat." This means: "There is nothing objectionable." There is nothing to hinder the publication of the book. Then the bishop gives his approbation. It is generally expressed by the word, "Imprimatur"—"Let it be printed."

The faithful may always know when a book is authentic. They will find the episcopal approbation on the marginal leaf. This is the seal of authority.

Goods and commodities are sometimes examined and stamped by public authority. The people are thus enabled to determine which are genuine. So it is with books that treat of religion.

The Church examines them. She stamps them with the seal of her authority. Thus the faithful can not be deceived. They know what books are in keeping with the spirit and teaching of Holy Church.

CHAPTER XI

Prohibited Books

CERTAIN books are forbidden to the faithful. It is not permitted to read, publish, or retain forbidden books. Such are books written by apostates, heretics and schismatics. Likewise are condemned all books that favor heresy or schism. Books that attack the fundamentals of religion are also condemned.

Those who are known as Catholics sometimes write books that are opposed to the principles of Faith. These books are condemned.

Certain books cast doubt upon the existence of a personal God. Others deny the creation, the historical truth of the Scriptures, the prophecies, miracles and the like. All such books are forbidden.

All books of non-Catholics that professedly treat of religion are forbidden. This prohibition includes the works of all that do not belong to the Catholic Church. It matters not whether they are Christians or infidels.

The law forbidding harmful books is universal. It binds all the faithful of the whole world. Ordinarily, this law entails a grave obligation. It is enforced by very severe censures.

It is forbidden to publish prohibited books. The author of the work is the real publisher. He may indeed give over the work to others for publication. Yet he himself is held as the responsible editor.

Books are condemned as a whole. Not merely the erroneous parts of a book are condemned. The whole book is condemned. Hence it is forbidden to read any part of a condemned book.

Translations of condemned books are forbidden. New and corrected

editions are also forbidden unless they are published with the approval of the proper eccelsiastical authority.

Books are condemned by a general or a special decree. Certain books belong to the class of books that are condemned by the general law. Others are condemned individually by a special decree.

Not all books are condemned individually. Books written by heretics, apostates and the like are forbidden by the general law. Other books are condemned in particular. The name of the author and the title of the books are mentioned in this decree.

Certain classes of books are prohibited. Books that professedly treat of obscene and lewd things are prohibited. Certain modern books that profess to give instruction on sex belong to this class. Then there are lewd novels that treat of illicit love and the like. These are also prohibited.

Certain books are written to calumniate the Church and things religious. These are prohibited.

Books that attack the inspiration or the concept of the Sacred Scripture are prohibited. Many such books have been written under the caption of "higher criticism."

Certain books cast aspersions on the hierarchy and the clerical state. They are prohibited.

There are books that treat of sorcery, magic, spiritism, and the like. Such books are forbidden. To these belong the Talmud, the Magazor and books that essay to tell future things by dreams. Other books that deal with diverse forms of superstitions are also prohibited.

Books that uphold dueling, suicide and divorce are forbidden. Likewise, are forbidden books that defend societies that are hostile to the Church.

Books that defend errors condemned by the Holy See are forbidden.

Pamphlets, journals and other periodicals that assail religion and morality are forbidden. They are very dangerous for those who read them.

Medals, statues, and pictures of Christ and the saints must be in keeping with the spirit and decrees of the Church. Otherwise they are forbidden.

Some books are forbidden only when not approved by ecclesiastical authority. Such are writings that relate new apparitions, prophecies and miracles. Other books on religion also belong to this class.

However, wonderful events may be published in periodicals. They are thus given forth as items of interest.

All versions of the Bible must be approved by the proper eccelsiastical authority. Otherwise, it is not permitted to read or retain them.

The Congregation of the Index passes

upon books that touch upon religion. It condemns those that are dangerous to faith or morals. The Holy Office also examines and passes upon books.

There is a list of forbidden books published by the Congregation of the Index. It is called the Index of prohibited books. It contains all those books that have been specifically condemned.

Those who knowingly read books forbidden by the Apostolic See incur excommunication. Likewise are those excommunicated who read books of heretics and apostates that defend their errors.

Those who knowingly publish or retain such books also incur excommunication.

Thus the Church by severe penalties guards the faithful against the great evil of bad books. She uses all her authority to keep her children from this seductive danger.

CHAPTER XII

Support of Pastors

THE Church commands the faithful to support their pastors. In this precept is naturally included the obligation to maintain the Church and school.

The obligation to support the ministers of God is natural and self-evident. But it is also commanded by both a divine and an ecclesiastical precept.

"In the Old Law," says T. Thomas, "tithes were given to support the ministers of God. Hence, Malachias (iii, 10) says: 'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house (and try me in this, saith the Lord).' Wherefore the command to pay tithes was indeed partly moral,

based upon reason, and partly judicial, having its force from divine institution. Reason dictates that the people should administer the necessary sustentation to those who by divine worship administer to the salvation of all the people. In like manner proper sustentation is due those who serve the interests of the community. Such are rulers, soldiers and others. The Apostle proves this through human customs, saying: 'Who serveth as a soldier at any time, at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?'[1]

". . . Thus it is clear that men are bound to pay tithes, partly by natural right and partly by the decision of the Church. The Church can determine the amount to be paid according to the circumstances of time and persons."[2]

[1] 1 Epistle to the Corinthians ix, 7.
[2] Summa Theol., q. lxxxvii; art. i.

The obligation to support the ministers of religion has been taught from the beginning. Christ said to His Apostles: "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses . . . for the workman is worthy of his meat."[3]

The faithful Christian is ever ready to support religion. In fact many make great material sacrifices for the honor of God. They contribute to the erection of beautiful churches and schools. They give liberally to the support of priest, church and school. This is the fruit of love. Those who love their Faith are liberal in providing for its material needs.

[3] St. Matthew x, 9, 10.

CHAPTER XIII

Cremation

CREMATION is forbidden by the Church. From the earliest days the Church has shown great reverence for the bodies of the dead. She teaches that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost. She teaches that they will rise again from the dead on the last day.

The early Fathers of the Church wrote against the practice of cremation. They gave many reasons why cremation should not be practiced amongst Christians.

Burning the bodies of the dead was a religious rite of paganism. The Christians wished to show that they had no part in paganism.

The pagan practice of cremation seemed to deny the resurrection of the dead. Thus the early Christians looked upon it as denying a central truth of Faith.

Christ was buried in a tomb. The faithful wanted to be buried like their divine Master. Hence, they rejected the pagan practice of burning the dead.

Burning the body also seemed to deny the immortality of the soul. At least it did not show sufficient reverence for the body that had been the habitation of the soul and the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Of itself, cremation does not deny any truth of Faith. It is opposed rather to reverence and Christian piety.

Today cremation is often meant as a protest against the Christian Faith. In these circumstances it may be equivalent to a denial of Faith.

There are those who promote the practice of cremation in our day. They wish to recall the pagan custom of burning bodies. They wish to abolish Christian cemeteries. Thus they may put an end to Christian funeral rites.

By cremation they wish to signify the total destruction of man at death. They deny the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul. Thus cremation may be a profession of heresy. It may be an attack on the Christian religion.

The Congregation of the Holy Office has in recent years issued several decrees against cremation. It forbids Catholics to join any society that furthers the practice of cremation.

Catholics are forbidden to leave instructions for the cremation of their bodies after death. They are also

forbidden to procure the cremation of others.

Those who insist on having their bodies burned after death are not permitted to receive the last Sacraments. Nor are they accorded Christian burial.

CHAPTER XIV

Ecclesiastical Penalties

THE Church can impose penalties upon those who transgress her laws. These are generally spiritual penalties. However, the Church can also impose material penalties.

The Church sometimes imposes a tax to be used as an alms. This is often attached to dispensations. It is a form of material penalty.

The Church imposes penalties for a twofold purpose. Punishment is intended to promote the salvation of souls. It also helps to preserve order and discipline in the Church.

The Church punishes her erring children. She wishes to correct them. She wishes to deter them and others from the commission of the fault. She

wishes to repair the scandal that has been given. In all her penalties the Church has all these purposes more or less in view.

Ecclesiastical penalties are threefold. They are ecclesiastical censures, vindictive penalties, and penalties of penitence.

Censures are intended especially to reform delinquent persons. They are remedial. There are three kinds of censures. They are excommunication, suspension, and interdict.

Vindictive penalties are intended to restore external order and discipline. They are also intended for the correction of crime. There are several kinds of vindictive penalties. Such are irregularity arising from a fault and ecclesiastical disgrace. Then there is the privation of Christian burial. The privation of certain rights and privileges, public corrections and the like, also belong to these penalties.

There are vindictive penalties. Such are privation of position, demotion, deposition and degradation.

Penalties of penitence are public acts of penance enjoined by the Church. They are intended to repair public scandal.

CHAPTER XV

Censures

CENSURES are remedial penalties. Through them rebellious members of the Church are deprived of certain spiritual advantages.

The Church censures only those of her children who have knowingly and wilfully committed a wrong. They must also know that they were committing a fault forbidden under censure.

The Church can not impose censures upon the unbaptized. They are not under her jurisdiction.

Censures do not deprive a person of grace and other internal spiritual favors that come direct from God. They can, however, deprive Christians of all graces, blessings, and privileges that come through the Church.

Faith teaches us that the Church has authority to impose censures upon her delinquent members. This authority is contained in the power to bind and loose. Christ said to the Apostles: "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."[1]

The Pope has jurisdiction over the whole Church. He can bind all the faithful with laws and censures. Bishops have jurisdiction over their own diocese. They can impose censures on their own subjects.

Censures are imposed only upon delinquents that are contumacious. They are imposed only on those who knowingly, rashly, with bold disdain, or with presumption, consent to crime. Hence, full knowledge of the guilt and

[1] St. Matthew xviii, 18.

the consequences is required to incur a censure.

Censures are imposed only for grave faults or crimes. These faults and crimes must be external and actually committed with contumacy.

Censures are imposed only for free and deliberate actions. Ignorance, when not gravely culpable, ordinarily excuses a delinquent from censure. Likewise grave fear and other grave hindrances to the liberty of his action, excuse him from the censure.

Censures that have been incurred can be removed only by absolution. This can only be given by legitimate authority. Absolution of a censure is the remission of the penalty by competent authority.

The guilty party may reform. Yet this does not remove the censure. Nor is it removed by the death of the superior that imposed it.

Certain censures are reserved. These

can be removed only by those who imposed them or by their ecclesiastical superiors. Their successors can also remove censures imposed by them.

Other censures are not reserved. These can be removed by any confessor. He may grant absolution from the censure within or without the confessional. If there was public scandal connected with the crime, it should be made public that the delinquent has received absolution from the censure.

Public absolution from censures is separate and distinct from sacramental absolution. Private absolution from censures is generally given in conjunction with sacramental absolution.

Any priest can absolve from all censures when the censured person is in imminent danger of death.

CHAPTER XVI

Excommunication

EXCOMMUNICATION is the most severe penalty that the Church can impose. It virtually embraces all other censures.

Excommunication excludes the delinquent from the body of the faithful. It deprives him of all the privileges and advantages that he enjoyed as a member of the Church.

The excommunicated are deprived of the Sacraments and all indulgences. They do not partake of the public prayers and suffrages of the Church. They do not enjoy any fruits from the Holy Sacrifices offered throughout the world. If they die unabsolved they are deprived of Christian burial.

Excommunication excludes a person from all the benefits of the Church.

When it is imposed for heresy it is sometimes called anathema.

Excommunication is not a curse. It is a remedial penalty inflicted for the sake of discipline and for the correction of delinquents.

Some are excommunicated by name. The Pope or bishop excommunicates them for a fault or crime, by a special act. These are said to be publicly excommunicated.

Others incur excommunication by the very fact of their fault. No special act of authority intervenes. They have broken a law, the penalty for which is excommunication.

In some cases the censure of excommunication is reserved in a special manner to the Pope. Again, it is simply reserved. Then also it may be reserved to the bishop. Thus the priest, to absolve from these censures must apply to the proper authority for faculties.

CHAPTER XVII

Excommunication Especially Reserved

CERTAIN persons incur excommunication especially reserved to the Pope. The bull "Apostoliae Sedis" enumerates thirteen such cases.

All apostates and heretics incur this excommunication. Apostates are those who wholly abandon the Christian Faith in which they were baptized. To incur excommunication their internal defection must be in some manner manifested. Yet they need not join any religious sect to incur this censure.

Heretics are Christians who wilfully and persistently deny any article of Faith taught by the Church.

To incur excommunication, heretics must give expression to their internal

heresy. This may take place by spoken word, deed, or writing. They need not join any sect to incur the censure.

Those who express belief in the errors of apostates and heretics also incur excommunication. They may not have joined their sect. They may not have shown any special liking for their errors. It suffices if they assert that they agree with the apostates and heretics in question.

Those who formally cooperate with apostates and heretics incur excommunication. Such are those who foster and defend them.

Those who without authority of the Apostolic See, read the books of apostates and heretics in which their heresies are defended, likewise, those who read any books especially prohibited by Apostolic letter, and those who retain, publish, and in any manner defend these books, incur excommunication.

Schismatics and those who persistently refuse obedience to the Roman Pontiff ruling at the time incur excommunication.

Each and all of whatsoever state, dignity, or condition who appeal from the decisions and mandates of the Roman Pontiff ruling at the time to a future council, also those by whose help, advice and favor the council was called, incur excommunication.

Those also incur excommunication who directly or indirectly interfere with the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Those also incur excommunication who without canonical permission compel civil judges to cite ecclesiastics before their courts. Likewise those are excommunicated who give forth laws and decrees contrary to the liberty and rights of the Church.

This censure affects only those who make laws that are hostile to the

Church in a wider sense. Such are those who make laws to expel Religious. Those also are included who make laws to hinder the clergy from fulfilling their ministry.

Those who have recourse to the civil law to prohibit the publication or execution of letters from the Holy See are excommunicated.

These letters include those that come from the Pope or from his legates or delegates. They also embrace those sent out by the Roman Curia.

Those who falsify Apostolic Letters are excommunicated. Such would be a letter falsely signed as coming from the Pope or certain of his vicars.

Those who seize ecclesiastical property incur excommunication. This refers to any unlawful seizure or possession of property that belongs to the Church.

Judges or those acting as judges

who set aside certain ecclesiastical jurisdiction incur excommunication.

This jurisdiction may be temporal or spiritual. It may refer to ecclesiastical property or rents. It may also refer to churches or benefices.

Those who by armed force invade or destroy, or hold the cities, lands, places and rights that belong to the Roman Church, incur the censure of excommunication. This censure embraces those who rule over these possessions. It also includes those who by help or advice aid in this unlawful procedure.

Certain men cooperated in the spoliation of the Papal possessions. Some contributed money. Others influenced the people by their writings and by public discourses. These all incurred excommunication.

There are several other instances in which persons incur excommunication especially reserved to the Pope.

CHAPTER XVIII

Other Excommunications

CERTAIN excommunications are reserved to the Pope in the ordinary manner. Those who have ordinary papal faculties may absolve from them.

The Holy See condemns under pain of excommunication, certain propositions. Those who publicly or privately defend any of these propositions incur the censure of excommunication.

Those who maliciously strike a cleric or Religious incur the censure of excommunication. This supposes a deed calculated to do serious injury.

This censure is only incurred when the action is a mortal sin. Those who strike such a person in self-defense or without sin, do not incur the censure.

Those who take part in a duel incur the censure of excommunication. This refers to the duel proper. It means an unlawful contest of two persons with deadly weapons, entered into by special arrangement.

Those who send or accept a challenge to a duel also incur the censure. It matters not if the duel does not take place.

Those who suggest or arrange the duel or act as seconds incur the same censure. Even those who go for the purpose of witnessing a duel incur the censure. Likewise do those in authority who fail to prohibit a duel when they have power to do so.

Churches, chapels, cemeteries, religious houses, seminaries, the dwellings of bishops, and hospitals wherein there is a public chapel, enjoy the privilege of immunity. This means that it is not permitted to take by force those who have taken refuge in any of these

places. This is called ecclesiastical immunity. Those who wilfully violate ecclesiastical immunity incur the censure of excommunication.

Those who, without authority, remove the bones or dust of any martyrs buried in the catacombs, incur the censure of excommunication.

Certain excommunications are reserved only to bishops. They can absolve from them by their jurisdiction.

Those who procure abortion incur this censure. This refers to abortion proper in which a non-viable foetus has actually been expelled. It refers only to wilful abortion that was intended.

In the United States, those who attempt marriage after having obtained a civil divorce are excommunicated. Those also incur the same censure who attempt marriage before a non-Catholic minister.

There are other excommunications that are not reserved. Those who by public authority or by violence demand the burial in consecrated ground of notorious heretics and those who have been excommunicated by name, incur this censure.

It is unlawful to alienate ecclesiastical property without the proper authorization. To do so is forbidden by censure.

To force a woman to enter a convent is forbidden. It is also forbidden to hinder a woman unjustly from entering. Those guilty of this action incur excommunication.

There are other causes for which the censure of excommunication is imposed. By her censures the Church binds the faithful to the observance of the law. She is ever ready to receive back to her bosom those penitent children who have incurred censure.

CHAPTER XIX

Interdict

INTERDICT is a censure that prohibits the exercise of liturgical offices. It prohibits the administration of certain Sacraments. It also prohibits Christian burial.

Excommunication excludes delinquents from communion with the body of the faithful. Suspension forbids delinquents the exercise of ecclesiastical power. Both these effects may result from the censure of interdict.

Interdict may be local, personal, or mixed. A place may be put under interdict. This is called a local interdict. A personal interdict involves only persons. Both a place and the persons in it may be placed under interdict. Then the interdict is mixed.

If an interdict affects a whole country or community or society, it is called a general interdict. If it affects only a particular person or place it is called a special interdict.

A whole parish may be placed under interdict because of a crime committed by a few individuals. Again, disobedience or rebellion against ecclesiastical authority may be the occasion of the censure.

When a church is under interdict, Mass may not be publicly said therein. However, Mass may be said privately. Thus the Blessed Sacrament is preserved for the sick.

On certain more solemn feasts, Mass may be said in an interdicted church with open doors. Yet those guilty of the crime which was the occasion of the censure must not approach the altar.

The ordinary distribution of Holy Communion is forbidden in an inter-

dicted church. Ordinations may not be held therein.

A cemetery might be placed under interdict. Then no ecclesiastical burial could licitly take place therein. An interdicted person can not licitly be buried in consecrated ground.

To refuse to obey the prohibitions of an interdict is a grave sin. Certain penalties are imposed upon those who violate an interdict.

Like the other censures the interdict is remedial. It is intended to bring the delinquent to a sense of his Christian duty.

CHAPTER XX

Secret Societies

IT IS forbidden under penalty of excommunication to join the Masonic sect. In like manner, it is forbidden to further the interests of this society. To do so is practical apostasy.

The members of the Masonic sect are called Free Masons or Masons. Their system is called Masonry or Freemasonry.

Masonry is a religious sect. It inculcates a form of natural religion. It is a system of morality taught by signs and symbols.

In the Middle Ages there were many guilds and craft-unions. The stone masons of those days had their guild. They had their lodges, their signs and pass-words.

The Masonic guilds of those days did not enter into the sphere of religion. They were mere trades-unions. The members were enjoined to be true to God and the Church.

But modern Masonry is a far different institution. It is called speculative Masonry. It began in the early part of the eighteenth century.

Modern Masonry is a religious sect. It has an extensive religious ritual. It uses may kinds of signs and symbols to teach its religious opinions.

There is an essential difference between modern Masonry and the Christian Masonry of the Middle Ages. "The radical contrast between the two types is obvious. While a Mason according to the old constitution was above all, obliged to be true to God and Church, avoiding heresies; his 'religious' duties, according to the new type are essentially reduced to the observation of the 'moral law' practi-

cally summed up in the rules of 'honor and honesty' as to which 'all men agree.' "[1]

Modern Masons profess a form of rationalism. They have reduced religion to mere naturalism. They have rejected the supernatural in religion.

Masons are said to be tolerant on matters of religion. They do not interfere with the "religious opinions" of the individual. Yet if anyone declares that divine Revelation is the infallible Truth, he becomes an enemy. All dogmas and positive beliefs are considered contradictory to Masonry.

The Bible is frequently quoted in Masonic rituals. God is introduced as the champion of Masonry. He is implored for help to make the candidates good Masons.

During the initiation of a candidate to the first degree, the "Worshipful Master says: 'Vouchsafe thine aid,

[1] The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. IX, page 773.

Almighty Father of the universe, to this our present convention: and grant that this candidate for Masonry may dedicate and devote his life to Thy service, and become a true and faithful brother among us. Endow him with a competency of Thy divine wisdom, that by the secrets of our art, he may be better enabled to display the beauties of brotherly love, relief and truth, to the honor of Thy holy name. Amen."[2]

Those who join Masonry take unlawful oaths. These oaths are sometimes confirmed by the most appalling imprecation.

The fraternity enjoined by Masonry is always limited to brother Masons. In this it bears no resemblance to Christian charity.

Christ clearly stated this distinction: "You have heard that it hath been

[2] Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor, page 30. Dick and Fizgerald, New York, 1868.

said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you. . . .

"For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this?"[3]

In the oath taken by a Master Mason, he swears: "I will always aid and assist all poor, distressed worthy Master Masons, their widows and orphans, knowing them to be such. . . ."[4]

The principles of Masonry are certainly opposed to Christian charity. They inculcate a narrow form of brotherhood. The candidate takes an oath to help those who take an oath to help him.

In most countries the Masonic sect

[3] St. Matthew v, 43–46.
[4] Duncan's Ritual, page 97.

has shown bitter hostility to the Church. These attacks have often been made openly.

The fundamental principles of Masonry are the same throughout the world. Masonry claims to be the universal religion in which all men can agree. It holds that defined doctrines are useless. It maintains that the ceremonies of worship, the Sacraments and the priesthood are superfluous. It declares that all men can find sufficient religion in its principles.

The Church has condemned Masonry for several reasons. She looks upon it as apostasy.

Masonry would reduce religion to a narrow form of humanitarianism. It lays claim to all the beautiful human virtues. Yet it ignores Christ and His teachings.

In 1738 Pope Clement XII condemned Masonry. In this document he clearly indicates the reasons why

this society should be condemned. He points out the fact that Masons profess an "intersectarian" religion. They are banded together by certain self-made laws and principles. They are satisfied with a certain external show of natural morality. They bind themselves to secrecy by a solemn oath taken on the Bible and confirmed by awful imprecations.

Pope Leo XIII says that the ultimate purpose of Masonry is "to overthrow the whole religious, political, and social order that is based on Christian principles and the establishment of a new order formed according to their own ideas and based upon the Principle of pure Naturalism."[5]

Those who join a Masonic society incur excommunication reserved to the Pope. Those who in any way promote the interests of Masonry incur the same censure.

[5] Encyclical: Humanum Genus, 1884.

There are other societies that are condemned. Such are all societies that are hostile to the Church. The same censures hold for them as for Masonry.

The Church condemns the principles, the tendency, the activity and the spirit of Masonry. She brands Masonry as a dangerous form of religious error. She warns her children against its hostility. She tells the faithful that they must choose between the Faith and Masonry.

Masonry and true Christianity mutually exclude each other. The Church excludes from her communion those who adopt the principles of Masonry. This is the meaning of all ecclesiastical condemnations.

St. Paul well expresses the thought. "Though an angel from heaven," he says, "preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."[6]

[6] Epistle to the Galatians i, 8.

The same Apostle warns the faithful against human religions. He would almost seem to be speaking of modern Masonry. "Beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ."[7]

There are other societies forbidden by the Church. The Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, and the Sons of Temperance are condemned by name.

There are other societies that belong to the class of condemned societies. Such are "those societies that under oath, commit to their members a secret to be withheld from all others, and demand absolute obedience to unknown leaders."[8]

Those who have joined any forbidden society must abandon it before they can be reconciled to the Church.

[7] Epistle to the Colossians ii, 8.
[8] Congregation of the Holy Office, May 10, 1884.

The Church condemns dangerous societies so as to warn the faithful against them. This is the meaning of her anathemas. She wishes to guard her children against seduction and error.

It is the duty of the Pope and the bishops to guard the flock of Christ. The Apostle says: "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood."[9]

[9] Acts of the Apostles xx, 28.

CHAPTER XXI

The Religious Life

GOD calls certain souls to consecrate their earthly lives to Him. They separate themselves from material cares. They devote themselves to religion. They bind themselves to God by solemn vows. These are called Religious.

Early in the history of the Church holy men and women consecrated themselves in a special manner to God.

In their great fervor, the early Christians often conceived disdain for the things of the world. Holy men soon began to seek solitudes where undisturbed they might meditate upon God and eternity.

In the middle of the fourth century many holy men took up their abode

in the deserts of Egypt, Syria and Palestine. They were called hermits. There in the wilderness they led saintly lives of contemplation.

Soon great monastic orders were founded. St. Basil and St. Benedict were the first to establish monastic rules.

Those who entered the religious orders for men were called monks. The members of female religious orders were called nuns.

The members of the religious orders followed a rule of life. This rule regulated every detail of their daily lives. Thus it is with all religious today.

The religious life is called the state of perfection. Those who enter it must strive for perfection. God chooses special souls for the religious state. They then have a vocation to enter religion.

Those who from pure motives desire

to serve God in religion, may be sure that they possess a vocation. Yet they should be fitted in mind and heart for this sublime calling.

There are those who long for greater perfection. They desire to consecrate their lives to God. They are ready to endure trials and tribulations. They love to labor and to pray. These have a vocation to the religious state.

The religious state is a life of labor and self-denial. It requires character and strength of soul. It demands unselfish devotion to the things of God. Otherwise it can bring no peace or contentment.

Religious are not free from spiritual trials. Often indeed these chosen souls are tried as if by fire. "When thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation."[1]

Those who enter religion take their

[1] Ecclesiasticus iii, 1.

human nature with them. They find human nature in those with whom they live. "Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another."[2]

Religious find their only peace and joy in spiritual things. Their happiness can come only with detachment from worldly things.

The first work of those who enter religion is to banish worldliness from their minds and hearts. They must learn to disdain mere human consolations. They must seek consolation in prayer and retirement. The religious life trains the heart. It leads its desires and hopes to God. It teaches the mind to dwell upon things eternal.

The religious life is a constant struggle against self. Day by day the spiritual combat must be waged. The

[2] Epistle to the Colossians iii, 12, 13.

selfish inclinations of nature must be curbed. Patiently faults and shortcomings must be uprooted.

The religious life is a school of self-denial. It is a constant rebuke to the evil inclinations of nature. There human nature is taught to follow the stern commands of reason, of conscience, and of Faith.

The imagination even is subjected to discipline. It is not permitted to wander aimlessly about. It is trained to picture spiritual things to the mind.

There the thoughts are trained to dwell upon the great concerns of eternity. The body and all its appetites are brought to subjection.

Thus the religious life is filled with constant and persevering labor. Unceasingly the religious must struggle to perfect every faculty of his soul.

The religious must lead the interior life. "The kingdom of God is within you, saith the Lord. Turn thee unto

the Lord with thy whole heart, and quit this miserable world, and thy soul shall find rest."[3]

Faithful and devout souls find great joy and happiness in the religious life. They learn to know the sweetness of prayer and meditation. They are filled with the hope of eternity. They know the power and consolation of self-denial. They taste the tender peace of a pure heart.

Devout religious live in the presence of God. They know the intense joy of spiritual love. "The love of things created is deceitful and inconstant; the love of Jesus is faithful and enduring. He that clingeth to the creature shall fall with its falling. He that embraceth Jesus shall be firmly rooted forever."[4]

[3] The Following of Christ: Book II, Chapter I, 1.
[4] The Following of Christ: Book II, Chapter VII, 1.

CHAPTER XXII

Religious Vows

RELIGIOUS are bound by the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The act of taking these three vows is called the Religious Profession.

Those only that have completed their sixteenth year can validly make the religious profession. Other conditions are also necessary. They must have spent at least a year in the novitiate. The novitiate is the training school in which candidates are prepared for the religious state.

In the novitiate candidates are trained for the duties and obligations of their future state. They are taught the principles and practices of the spiritual life.

All candidates observe strict discipline during their novitiate. This is the rule of the religious life. During this time they are tried and tested by their superiors.

After the novitiate is completed, those who are fitted are called to make the religious profession. Then they are still free. They may take the vows or they may return to the world.

All religious take the vow of poverty. By this vow they renounce all temporal possessions. Thenceforth they are not permitted to own property or possess money or anything of material value.

The vow of poverty engenders detachment from the things of this world. It was the advice of Christ to His disciples: "So likewise everyone of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, can not be my disciple."[1]

Again, he said to the rich young man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go

[1] St. Luke xiv, 33.

sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me."[2]

Religious practice voluntary poverty. They are thus imitating Christ. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich, he became poor, for your sakes; that through his poverty you might be rich."[3]

Sins against the vow of poverty may be grievous. Yet in slight matters they are only venial sins.

Religious take the vow of chastity. They do not marry. They lead a life of celibacy. They bind themselves by vow to be pure in thought, word and deed.

Chastity is a means of perfection. It is one of the Evangelical counsels. The state of celibacy and chastity is intended to enable devout souls to devote their whole life to God. They

[2] St. Matthew xix, 21.
[3] 2 Epistle to the Corinthians viii, 9.

are free from earthly love. They may thus more easily set their whole heart upon God.

St. Paul recommends this holy state. "But I say to the unmarried, and to the widows: It is good for them if they so continue, even as I. . . . Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful. . . . I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. . . . And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit."[4]

Religious take the vow of obedience. By this vow they bind themselves in obedience to their religious superiors. The vow of obedience binds religious to obey all the precepts of their superi-

[4] 1 Epistle to the Corinthians vii, 8–34.

ors. By obedience to them they obey the rules and constitution of their order.

The virtue of obedience is a great means of sanctification for religious. By this virtue they strive to subject their will to the will of their superiors. To them the will of their superiors represents the will of God.

When religious obey their superiors they obey God. It is for love of God that they practice obedience.

The authority of religious superiors is defined by the rule of the order. They command only such obedience as is prescribed by the rule.

Superiors always respect the conscience of their subjects. Every religious is custodian of his own conscience.

The obedience of religious is the obedience of love. The authority of religious is the authority of meekness.

Obedience ennobles the soul. It engenders humility and forbearance. "The mind of the just studieth obedience."[5]

Christ left us the most sublime example of obedience. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."[6]

To violate the vow of obedience may be a grave sin. The deliberate violation of any grave precept would constitute a mortal sin. However, in slight matters it would be venial.

By obedience religious make progress toward perfection. It is especially fruitful in curbing the unreasonable demands of nature.

He who practices the virtue of obedience becomes master of himself. His will is strengthened. His character is made sturdy. "An obedient man shall speak of victory."[7]

[5] Proverbs xv, 28. [6] Epistle to the Philippians ii, 8.
[7] Proverbs xxi, 28.

Those who practice obedience imitate Christ. In Gethsemane, He said: "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done."[8]

[8] St. Matthew xxvi, 42.

CHAPTER XXIII

Physicians and Surgeons

DOCTORS are bound to give the remedies which they consider safer. They are not allowed to experiment at the risk of injuring their patients.

It is not allowed to perform an operation that is purely experimental. Nor is it allowed to give medicine merely to learn what effect it will have. There must be some well-grounded hope of helping the patient.

Experiments can be made upon dumb brutes. It is a sin against justice to make them upon human beings.

The rule is, no remedy should be applied except that which will probably help the patient. Yet there are cases in which doubtful remedies may be

given. There are cases in which life is practically despaired of. In such cases extreme measures may be taken.

Here it is allowed to perform an operation or give a remedy the result of which is doubtful. It may help the patient or it may hasten death. Yet it is not allowed to apply such a remedy when the patient is unwilling.

Care must be taken in administering opiates. These are given to alleviate pain. They are ordinarily given as hypodermic injections of morphine, cocaine and other drugs. Certain patients are prone to contract the drug habit. Doctors should guard against their weakness. Then there are those who are addicted to the habit. They should not supply them with syringe or drugs.

Doctors should not make useless visits to their patients. Nor should they give them medicines when they know it will not help them. This

might be a form of deception. It may be causing useless expense to a patient.

Yet a doctor may visit his patient for other reasons. He may know that he can not cure him. But he can alleviate his pain. He can comfort him. He can satisfy the desires of his relatives.

It is unjust for a doctor to demand an extraordinary fee unless he has forewarned his patient. Nor should he demand of the poor fees that are intended only for the well-to-do or the rich. He should demand only an ordinary fee for ordinary services.

The doctor should warn his patient when death is approaching. He may be bound in conscience to do so. The patient may be in mortal sin. He may need time to prepare for death. Thus it would be a grave sin against charity to permit him to remain in ignorance of his approaching death.

In time of contagious disease, the

doctor is bound to care for his patients. He may be bound to them by contract. Then he is bound to remain with them even at the risk of his own life.

Doctors should preserve delicacy as far as possible. Their profession is filled with spiritual danger for them. It is often necessary to fulfil delicate offices. Yet these should be avoided except when there is real necessity.

They should never prescribe remedies for an unlawful purpose. Nor indeed should they take part in any unlawful operation.

Remedies are sometimes sought for an unlawful purpose. Some doctors simulate. They give a harmless drug. They think to deter the person from effecting her purpose. Yet this may be a cause of scandal. The effect may follow accidentally. Then the person thinks that the doctor produced the effect.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Happiness of Virtue

IN THE Sermon on the Mount, Christ declares that the virtuous are happy. He calls them blessed.

All true joy is from God. "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us: thou hast given gladness in my heart."[1]

Man was made for God. He yearns for eternal bliss. Hence whatever unites him with God gives him joy.

Virtue puts man in order with God. It makes his will conform to God's will. It regulates his actions according to right reason. "Submit thyself then to him (God) and be at peace: and thereby thou shalt have the best fruits."[2]

[1] Psalm iv, 7.
[2] Job xxii, 21.

Those who obey God's law possess peace of heart. "Much peace have they that love thy law, and to them there is no stumbling block."[3]

Those who keep God's Commandments are at peace. They are following the way of God. "For if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou hadst surely dwelt in peace forever."[4]

The virtuous man is free from the tyrannical bondage of sin. He is not enslaved by his passions as is the man who is given up to sin. "His own iniquities catch the wicked, and he is fast bound with the ropes of his own sins."[5]

The virtuous do not feel the dread and disquiet that haunt the sinner. "Tribulation shall terrify him, and distress shall surround him, as a king that is prepared for the battle. For

[3] Psalm cxviii, 165.
[4] Baruch iii, 13.
[5] Proverbs v, 22.

he hath stretched out his hand against God, and hath strengthened himself against the Almighty."[6] "But the wicked are like the raging sea, which can not rest, and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire. There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God."[7]

Virtue fills the heart with hope. "The expectation of the just is joy; but the hope of the wicked shall perish."[8]

Even the just must suffer in this world. "And the Lord will help them and deliver them: and he will rescue them from the wicked, and save them, because they have hoped in him."[9]

Those who are faithful to God have strength in time of trial and sorrow. "The Lord is good, and giveth strength

[6] Job xv, 24, 25.
[7] Isaias lvii, 20, 21.
[8] Proverbs x, 28.
[9] Psalm xxxvi, 40.

in the day of trouble: and knoweth them that hope in him."[10]

Fidelity to God brings courage to the heart. "He that feareth the Lord, shall tremble at nothing, and shall not be afraid; for He is his hope."[11]

The faithful Christian understands the sorrows and tribulations of this life. His hope is in eternity. "But we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience: and patience, trial; and trial hope: and hope confoundeth not: because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."[12]

It is far different with those who are given up to a life of sin. They shall say: "We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among

[10] Nahum i, 7.
[11] Ecclesiasticus xxxiv, 16.
[12] Epistle to the Romans v, 3–5.

the children of God. . . . We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All these things are passed away like a shadow."[13]

Those who follow the moral precepts of God never know the bitterness of remorse. To none of these does that reproach apply: "And thou mourn at last, when thou shalt have spent thy flesh and thy body, and say: Why have I hated instruction, and my heart consented not to reproof, and have not heard the voice of them that taught me."[14]

Blessed is the sinner when he turns to God with his whole heart. He then sees the true beauty of virtue. "And

[13] Wisdom v, 4–9.
[14] Proverbs v, 11–13.

I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: because they shall return to me with their whole heart."[15]

Virtue strengthens faith. It begets confidence and trust in God. "They that trust in him, shall understand the truth: and they that are faithful in love shall rest in him: for grace and peace is to his elect."[16]

There is sweetness in the practice of virtue that nothing else on earth can give. It satisfies our nobler self. "Light is risen to the just, and joy to the right of heart."[17]

Virtue is the highest wisdom. It makes the creature obedient to the will of the Creator. It enables man to attain the object for which he was created.

[15] Jeremias xxiv, 7.
[16] Wisdom iii, 9.
[17] Psalm xcvi, 11.

To be faithful to God's law is true wisdom. It is to prefer eternity to time. It is to prefer God to all the creatures of earth.

Christian piety imparts simplicity and meekness of heart. It helps us to set our hearts upon God and eternity.

No earthly pleasure can satisfy the desires of our heart. The joys of earth are fleeting. God is the highest Good. By a virtuous life we live in anticipation of God. "This is happiness," says St. Augustine, "to rejoice in anticipation of Thee and in Thee and for Thy sake. . . . A good man lives, sees, and loves: he lives in God's eternity, he sees His truth, he rejoices in His greatness."[18]

To contemplate God is the highest intellectual pursuit of which man is capable. To love God is the sublimest act that the human will can perform.

[18] Conferences 10, 32; de cir. 12, c. 1, 3; 11, c.

Thus man can find perfection only in the service of God.

Virtue is the manifestation of true, vigorous life. It reveals the true purpose of life. It is the quality that makes for success.

Men rejoice when they attain success. They are successful when they reach the object for which they strive. But life should be a struggle for God and eternal beatitude. By the practice of virtue we attain this object.

Virtue is a noble form of heroism. It is a courageous struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It brings the joy of conquest into our lives. There is no joy on earth like the joy of a good conscience. This comes from fidelity to God. It comes from the practice of virtue.

Sweet is the joy of a day well spent. It brings the satisfaction of a purpose fulfilled. But sweeter still will be the closing of our life's day if we have lived for

God. "O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet: blessed is the man that hopeth in him."[19]

To love and serve God is to know the true joy of living. "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life, thou shalt fill me with joy, with thy countenance; at thy right hand are delights even to the end."[20]

[19] Psalm xxxiii, 9.
[20] Psalm xv, 11.

CHAPTER XXV

Christian Manhood

CATHOLIC moral teaching furnishes men the principles and practices of true manhood. It enables them to possess nobility of life and character.

Catholic morality is strictly in keeping with right reason. It is suited to the needs of fallen human nature. It perfects our nature.

Good is the object of morality. Catholic moral teaching shows men true good. It guides them in all their activities. It makes their lives sublimely reasonable.

Not all things are allowed to man upon earth. Reason tells him that he must regulate his desires. It is as if he possessed a double personality.

The one is the man of duty. The other is the man of pleasure.

We do not always perform the good that we love. We sometimes do the evil that we hate. "For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good," says the Apostle, "for to will, is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not. For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do: . . . Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord."[1]

Reason elevates man. The senses drag him down. This is the conflict that rages in all humanity.

History is replete with sad examples of this conflict. Great and good men have fallen in the struggle. But we are provided with the weapons of

[1] Epistle to the Romans vii, 18–25.

victory. The rational man can prevail over the animal man. The man of duty triumphs over the man of pleasure.

Reason is the masterpiece of nature. It is the basis of natural morality. Reason tells us our duties toward ourselves, toward our fellowmen and toward God.

Reason points aloft to truth, and honor, and justice. It suggests the practice of virtue.

Man must act as a man. He must live as a rational creature. Then his life is in keeping with natural morality.

Catholic morality is but the perfection of natural morality. Catholic morality adds the divine element to natural morality.

Natural morality makes the good natural man. Catholic morality perfects the natural man. It makes him a Christian. It fits him for his eternal destiny. Faith extends the sphere of reason into the supernatural. Like-

wise, Catholic morality increases and amplifies natural morality.

The good Christian is necessarily an honorable man. He is necessarily true, honest and sincere. He must possess all the noble qualities of true manhood before he can be a good Christian.

The good Christian is the man who regulates his life according to Catholic moral teaching. He is a man of character. His life is guided by firm principles of conduct.

The man of character is courageous. In every contingency he follows the fixed standards of morality. He will not compromise with false opinions. He does not fear the criticism of men. He knows the right course. It has been pointed out to him by reason confirmed by divine intervention. It has been defined by Catholic moral teaching.

The good Christian is a man of duty. He looks upon life as a time of

struggle and conquest. He bears in mind his eternal destiny. His great concern upon earth is to do the will of God.

To be faithful to duty is to be united with God. "Jesus answered, and said to him: If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him."[2]

It is the will of God that we be always faithful to the duties of life. Day by day, hour by hour, we must renew our fervor. We must strive to do the will of God even in little things.

The good Christian has an ideal of life. He lives for this ideal. It is the sum total of the divine Faith which he has received from God.

Faith has taught him more than all the philosophies of man could teach him. It has made him a man of God, a supernatural man.

[2] St. John xiv, 23.

The life of the true Christian is filled with optimism. He knows the true meaning of life. His soul is filled with hope and peace. He sees the better side of life.

The faithful Christian is a man of generosity. His Faith teaches him the true dignity of humanity. Catholic morality teaches him to love his neighbor as himself.

He is a man of peace and justice. The very spirit of Christianity is peace. Justice is a cardinal virtue of Catholic morality.

The good Christian is a man of candor and sincerity. He is bound by sacred precepts to deal nobly with all men.

The teachings of Catholic morality make men noble and true. They know how to practice self-sacrifice. They know how to show unselfish devotion.

The true Christian regulates his life according to Faith. Thus his whole life is directed to God. His life is more than a mere natural existence upon earth. It is in a sense a supernatural life.

By Faith we become partakers of God's knowledge. We know our eternal destiny. We are sons of God.

Faith made perfect by charity lifts us up. The power of charity enables us to do supernatural works. It gives strength to fulfil our duty toward God and our fellowman.

God loves us. We love Him in return. Because of our love for God we strive to do His will. We yearn to be united with Him.

As long as we love God we persevere in seeking good. We possess fortitude and patience. We show meekness and forbearance toward our fellowman.

Charity reminds us that we are men of duty. It helps us suppress

our desires for pleasure. It makes us shun all that can hinder our course to God.

Those who live the life of Faith lead heroic lives. They are constantly striving upward. Every day, every hour perhaps, they must combat the unreasonable desires of nature.

Man is like an aeroplane. This machine is heavier than air. When it arises its tendency is to fall downward. Man is encumbered with a body of flesh. It tends to sink the spiritual life. It is only by the persevering activity of his nobler faculties that he can rise and proceed in the spiritual life of a Christian.[3]

Our Faith calls into action all our nobler faculties. By the practice of Faith our will becomes strong. Our reason is illumined by the light of

[3] La Virilité Chrétienne; P. Gillet: p. 142. Desclee, De Broun & Co.; Paris.

Faith. Our intellect is made skillful by the wisdom of divine Truth.

The faithful Christian must be a man of thought and prudence. He does not take for granted all that he reads or hears. He shuns the sophistries of unbelievers.

Intellectual faith is necessary, especially in our day. Ignorance on matters of religion is the cause of many sad misfortunes to souls.

It is not enough to believe. We must know the reasons for our Faith. Else we are in danger of being deceived by the false reasons of unbelief.

In modern life all men read. A man may be known by the character of his reading. Little by little the sentiments and principles that we read infiltrate into our minds.

The practice of reading good books is most beneficial to the heart and the mind. To read books on religion is to

enrich the heart with treasures that will be priceless throughout eternity.

Our Faith teaches us the true dignity of man. "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?

"Thou hast made him a little less than the angels. Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor:

"And hast set him over the works of thy hands.

"Thou hast subjected all things under his feet."[4]

[4] Psalm viii, 5–8.

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